

REMARKS BY US AMBASSADOR OF RUSSIA ALEXANDER VERSHBOW AT THE CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER TENTH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE MARRIOTT ROYAL AURORA HOTEL, 10:00, APRIL 22, 2004

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Alexander Vershbow: Thanks very much, Jessica, and thanks both to you and to Andrew Kuchins for inviting me here to join in celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Carnegie Moscow Center. The Roman playwright Claudius suggested anniversaries be celebrated with wine and sweet words. We had plenty of both at last night's reception, and I hope, more to come this evening, at the banquet. So, instead let me offer a little food for thought to start off this conference. On an anniversary such as this, the simplest approach might be to look back, to look at what has been achieved in Russian-American relations and in Russia over the past 10 years, and to savor our successes, of which there certainly have been many. But looking around the room today, I realize that many of you have been personally involved in the events of the last decade and could recount them far better than me. So, instead I'd like to use my brief remarks to look forward and to try to identify some of the principal challenges and opportunities that the US-Russian relationship will face in the next decade, and where the Carnegie Moscow Center and its many friends, hopefully, can help. Needless to say, the most prominent of those challenges is certain to remain the global war on terrorism. If something good can be said to have come out of the tragedy of September 11, it's that two long-time adversaries, the United States and Russia, are now cooperating closely on several fronts in this war. Currently much of our counter-terrorism cooperation consists of consultations on policy and intelligence sharing, which provide a good foundation. I hope that in the future, however, we will establish greater operational coordination between our law enforcement agencies, militaries and special services so that we can strengthen our deterrent capacities and be more capable of undertaking joint operations to prevent terrorist acts and to eliminate terrorist networks. As we all know, however, although we have to win the war against terrorists, it's just as important that we win the peace. The only long-term solution to terrorism is to address the very roots of the problems by changing the conditions that breed despair, anger and fanatical hatred of modern civilization. We are trying to encourage reform, democracy and human rights in the greater Middle East for the most practical reasons. Democracies don't support terrorists or threaten the world with weapons of mass murder. Open societies that offer people opportunities to participate in the process of economic and social modernization are less likely to see their younger generation fall under the sway of fundamentalist ideologies that glorify terror and the murder of innocents. Through his Greater Middle East initiative President Bush is trying to promote freedom and democracy in a region that has rarely known it, while recognizing that change must ultimately come from within the societies and can't be imposed. Russia has thus far reacted very cautiously to the Greater Middle East initiative. But we believe Russia can and should be a vital partner in this endeavor. Russia, with a Moslem population larger than that of the entire European Union, presents a model of how Moslem communities can flourish in harmony with their non-Moslem neighbors and contribute to social and economic

progress without succumbing to polarizing fundamentalism. Russia also has long-standing ties with many Middle Eastern countries, enabling it to serve as a force for positive change in places where America has less influence. So, in the coming years one of the challenges is to find a way for Russia, the United States and other democracies to work together to help the peoples of the Greater Middle East to move down the path of reform and to deal with terrorism at its source. While working together to remove the roots of terror, we also need to do a better job in keeping the world's most terrifying weapons out of the hands of terrorists and rogue regimes. This requires a global effort, in which Russia should play a central role to shore up the existing and increasingly porous non-proliferation regimes. Libya's recent repudiation of its WMD program demonstrates that we can deter proliferators by raising the political and economic costs of their illicit activities. The proliferation security initiative to interdict traffic in WMD technologies is a key contributor in this regard, and we welcome the prospect of Russia soon becoming a full participant in PSI. The recent revelations about the details of A.Q. Kahn's sales network have given us a glimpse into the ability of global proliferation networks to circumvent existing non-proliferation regimes. As President Bush proposed on February 11, insisting that all states interested in civilian nuclear power technology sign an IAEA additional protocol would be one remedy, but other new measures and other new ideas will also be needed to keep up with the fast pace of technology and to thwart the efforts of terrorists in the states that support them to acquire WMD. Looking beyond political-military challenges like terrorism and proliferation, in the next few years we'll also need to broaden our definition of security to include other transnational threats to our societies and populations. Presidents Bush and Putin have already recognized the importance of cooperation on the challenge posed by HIV/AIDS, a threat that Secretary Powell's called "the greatest weapon of mass destruction in the world today." Like the terrorists who struck in Manhattan, Moscow and Madrid, HIV/AIDS is a relentless enemy that, clearly, knows no boundaries. Without intervention researchers predict that over 75 million people will be affected worldwide by the year 2010, with a loss of human life to AIDS totaling 100 million by the year 2020. Scientists predict that more than 2 million Russians could be infected by 2005, next year, and millions more by 2010. In fact, the HIV virus is spreading more rapidly here than in almost any country on the planet. Unless decisive action is taken, and soon, Russia faces a humanitarian catastrophe rivaling that of World War II. Unfortunately, this represents an area that's tailor-made for bilateral cooperation as the AIDS epidemic began in the United States years before it struck Russia. We have considerable experience in treating the disease and controlling its spread. Russia has an educated population and an expanding sector of dedicated NGOs that provide hope that concerted efforts at prevention can succeed here. What these organizations lack is resources and, most crucially, high-level political support. In addition, Russia is blessed with the large and talented medical and scientific community that can play an important role in international efforts to find a cure and develop a vaccine. Given our complementary resources and our mutual interest in staving off disaster, the AIDS crisis provides an ideal opportunity to demonstrate the potential of our partnership for the betterment of Russia's own people and all of humanity. I've dwelt so far on common threats that the US and Russia need to confront together in the years ahead, but there's also a lot of promising opportunities that we together can seize. In particular, I hope that in the years to come our countries will work together to complete the integration of Europe - a process that promises greater stability and prosperity for all peoples in this part of the world. Last month NATO welcomed seven new member states from Central and Eastern Europe, and in a little over a week the European Union will enlarge to include 10 new members, mostly from the former communist block. In recent months Russia has been complaining about some of the

problems it perceives in these twin enlargements. Russia does have a knack for accentuating the negative. But certainly, there are issues that have to be worked out as this process of Europe's integration continues. But we believe that the enlargement of both organizations will ultimately work to Russia's benefit by creating more stable, prosperous neighbors to its west. At the same time I agree with those who say that our goal of building a Europe united, free and at peace will not be realized without including Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union in the integration process. This doesn't necessarily mean membership, although, speaking as a former ambassador to NATO, that door is open to any European democracy that is interested in both the burdens and the benefits. But membership aside, the challenge before us right now is to use all the mechanisms that exist - the NATO-Russia Council, the EU-Russia partnership and cooperation agreement, OSCE, Partnership for Peace and many others - and also to think of new ways to combine our efforts to consolidate peace and mutually beneficial cooperation across Europe and Eurasia. This includes finding ways for Russia and the United States to cooperate in promoting stability and reform in other states of the former Soviet Union, rather than treating these countries as objects of competition in a zero-sum game. This may be the area where it will be the hardest to overcome suspicions and outdated concepts of spheres of influence, but we, nevertheless, need to try. Completing the integration of Europe will be advanced by Russia's own continued economic growth and integration in the global economy. This is another area of opportunity where we need to proceed on the basis of shared interests. A growing economy that spreads prosperity broadly across Russian society will contribute to Russia's own stability and make Russia a stronger partner in addressing the threats I mentioned earlier. President Putin's key economic objectives - doubling GDP within ten years and eliminating poverty - if pursued in earnest, will create an economically prosperous Russia that can, in turn, be an engine for growth in other countries in the region. This growth will require even greater commitment to the reform process, including the political will to open markets, eliminate remaining trade and investment barriers, such as export subsidies, and create a stable and predictable climate based on the rule of law for promoting entrepreneurship and attracting foreign capital. We are certainly impressed by the initial reform plans of the new government, but still, some of the signals in this area continue to be a little mixed. In parallel with economic development, we hope for political developments that strengthen Russia's democratic institutions and civil society. The past ten years have seen enormous progress, but there've also been developments that have raised concerns and that, experience shows, can affect our relations. We hope these problems will be addressed in President Putin's second term. Secretary of State Powell said it best when he wrote in Izvestia in January that Russia's future greatness lies in its achieving stable democratic institutions, political, economic and intellectual freedom, form the gateway to prosperity, strength and social development in the 21st century. And I'd add that, as with economic reform, the Russian example will have great influence on developments in other members of the CIS. Another opportunity that I hope to see our countries seize in the coming years is the opportunity to build stronger ties not only between our governments, but also between our peoples and societies. One of the reasons why our relationships with traditional allies, such as France and Germany, have been able to weather the occasional policy disagreement is because these relationships are anchored by strong ties between individuals and between institutions of civil society. So, I'd like to see the same broad inter-societal ties flourish between the United States and Russia to ensure that private citizens in both countries have a greater stake in the relationship's success. Since the end of the Cold War the US government has made a huge investment toward that goal, funding a variety of exchanges that have permitted more than 50,000 to study or meet their counterparts in the United States. Funding for

many of these programs, however, is slated to decline. So, now we are challenging all of the stakeholders - the private sector, academia, foundations and other organizations - to build on the success of these programs by contributing to their future, and also by making exchanges more of a two-way street, as not enough Americans have come over here. Just last month the Embassy held a high-level symposium that some of you may have attended in order to build non-governmental support for exchanges. One example of where we're already at work, broadening the relationship, is the US-Russia Volunteer Initiative, which will start this summer. This is the first joint program with participants and support from both America and Russia that will place young people as volunteers in NGOs and humanitarian organizations in each other's country. I could go on listing areas where I hope to see expanded US-Russian cooperation over the next ten years, although if I did, you probably wouldn't invite me ever to speak again. So, let me just conclude by saying, I do think we need to broaden our horizons, we need to set our sights higher, if our partnership is to achieve its full potential, and if it's to take on the quality of the relations the United States has with its traditional allies. New thinking, new ideas will be needed to get there. And we will be looking to think tanks like the Carnegie Moscow Center and to many of the individuals present here today to come up with those ideas. Indeed, unlike governments, which inevitably focus their energies on pressing issues and crisis management, think tanks like the Carnegie Moscow Center have the luxury of being able to look ahead and consider longer term strategies and issues. The Carnegie Moscow Center has for ten years been a force for positive change and democracy in Russia, and for the promotion of the principle of enlightened self-interest in Russia's foreign policy. The Center has enriched the policy community with its insights, analysis and intellectual integrity. It's truly become a model against which similar institutions are measured. So, let me wish continued success to Andy Kuchins, the director, and to the Center's extraordinarily talented and dedicated staff. Let me also recognize the other men who have served previously as directors of the Center over the past decade - Alan Rousso, who we are happy to see here today, as well as Bob Nurick (sp.), Scott Bruckner (sp.), Richard Burger (sp.) and Peter Fisher (sp.), who, unfortunately, couldn't make it for this event. I'd also like to recognize the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which has a long and distinguished history of contributing to the formation of US foreign policy, and which is represented here by its distinguished president, Jessica Mathews. We don't always agree with the Endowment on every issue, but US foreign policy, surely, has benefited enormously from its insights. And finally, let me close by paying special tribute to Mort Abramowitz, Jessica's predecessor, who conceived the idea of bringing the Carnegie Endowment to Russia and establishing this unique Center. As you said last night, Mort, the idea came to you in a flash while watching the failed 1991 coup on TV, which was the day when we feared that the Soviet Union would be turning back toward its past. Thanks to your vision, Russia has a remarkable institution. It has for ten years helped to guide this country toward a more positive future. So, as Russia opens a new chapter in its development, I think the Carnegie Moscow Center's role over the next decade will, if anything, be even more important. So, again, thank you very much for the privilege of opening this conference and for letting me share some ideas on Russian-American relations. Let me say on behalf of President Bush, since I have no special text to read, but on behalf of President Bush, his entire administration and the US Embassy, let me wish the Carnegie Moscow Center a happy 10th anniversary, and I hope to be present at your 20th birthday party as well.

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